

# 10 State Actions To Ensure Effective Data Use

The Data Quality Campaign (DQC) has identified three overarching imperatives for changing the culture around data use and maximizing states' investments in longitudinal data systems. Within these imperatives, the DQC also has identified 10 actions states need to take to ensure key stakeholders use the data effectively.

**Expand** the ability of state longitudinal data systems to link across the P–20 education pipeline and across state agencies.

1

Link state K–12 data systems with early learning, postsecondary education, workforce, social services and other critical state agency data systems.

2

Create stable, sustained support for robust state longitudinal data systems.

3

Develop governance structures to guide data collection, sharing and use.

4

Build state data repositories (e.g., data warehouses) that integrate student, staff, financial and facility data.

**Ensure** that data can be accessed, analyzed and used, and communicate data to all stakeholders to promote continuous improvement.

5

Implement systems to provide all stakeholders timely access to the information they need while protecting student privacy.

6

Create progress reports with individual student data that provide information educators, parents and students can use to improve student performance.

7

Create reports that include longitudinal statistics on school systems and groups of students to guide school-, district- and state-level improvement efforts.

**Build** the capacity of all stakeholders to use longitudinal data for effective decisionmaking.

8

Develop a purposeful research agenda and collaborate with universities, researchers and intermediary groups to explore the data for useful information.

9

Implement policies and promote practices, including professional development and credentialing, to ensure that educators know how to access, analyze and use data appropriately.

10

Promote strategies to raise awareness of available data and ensure that all key stakeholders, including state policymakers, know how to access, analyze and use the information.

The DQC is a national, collaborative effort to encourage and support state policymakers to improve the availability and use of high-quality education data to improve student achievement. The campaign will provide tools and resources that will help states implement and use longitudinal data systems, while providing a national forum for reducing duplication of effort and promoting greater coordination and consensus among the organizations focused on improving data quality, access and use.

# Implications for Policymakers

Although states have made impressive progress on implementing their longitudinal data systems, too few have taken the necessary steps to ensure that the information produced by these data systems is harnessed to inform and improve the processes and outcomes of states' education efforts. This shift requires building the political will and taking the practical steps to remove current barriers to accessing, sharing and using these data.

Following is an overview of priority areas for action by federal and state policy leaders (the executive branch, Congress, governors, state legislators, state boards of education, chief state school officers and others). Effective, action-oriented data systems are as critical to a state's education infrastructure as bridges are to the transportation infrastructure. The data systems must remain a priority for federal, state and local policymakers.

## Actions for federal and state policymakers include:

### Expand the ability of state longitudinal data systems to link across the P–20 education pipeline and across state agencies.

- ☐ Ensure that there is a line item in the state budget for the maintenance and growth of these systems;
- ☐ Clarify state and federal policies that ensure the protection of personally identifiable information while also authorizing the state longitudinal data system to collect, share and link data from multiple systems for the purposes of evaluation and continuous improvement;
- ☐ Create a governance structure and implement the necessary agreements (political, legal and practical) among various agencies to ensure data can be shared across and among P–12 and

postsecondary systems and other critical data systems in ways that protect data quality, ensure transparency and promote efficiency;

- ☐ Emphasize interoperability across systems and states (e.g., standard definitions, specifications); and
- ☐ Create the political demand for sharing data — use the bully pulpit to talk about the need for information to follow individual students, even across state and district lines, and to break down the traditional silos.

### Ensure that data can be accessed, analyzed and used, and communicate data to all stakeholders to promote continuous improvement.

- ☐ Ensure all stakeholders have appropriate access to longitudinal data;
- ☐ Promote the effective and timely presentation of this information to advance its use; and
- ☐ Support the development of early warning systems, growth models and predictive analysis tools that use longitudinal student data to inform and improve teaching and learning.

### Build the capacity of all stakeholders to use longitudinal data for effective decisionmaking.

- ☐ Emphasize the role of robust data systems in the school improvement planning process and professional development activities;
- ☐ Change teacher certification requirements and offer incentives to ensure that teachers have facility with accessing and using data; and
- ☐ Support and invest in advances in technology to improve the efficiencies of data access, analysis and communication.

## An Attainable Goal

Using valid, reliable and consistent information to drive all decisions across the education sector — a transformation that was not even conceivable a mere three years ago — is now an attainable goal. Thanks to the hard work and leadership of states and the growing national momentum behind this agenda, policymakers, educators and families increasingly have the information they need to ensure every child has the knowledge and skills to succeed.

Over the next three years, the DQC will continue to assist states in developing data systems based on the 10 essential elements and in using the information to improve student performance. To help ensure that states benefit from their infrastructure investments, the DQC will focus on two high-priority needs: building demand for the newly available information and helping state agencies assist all stakeholders in harnessing this powerful source of information.

### Changing the Culture around Data Use

